

To: Carey, Curtis[Carey.Curtis@epa.gov]
From: McGrath, Shaun
Sent: Sat 8/22/2015 5:48:05 PM
Subject: Re: Silverton, San Juan County EPA Public Meeting

Thx Curtis. We should not yet confirm participation on Thur. I'm waiting for the green light from HQ. There are some sensitivities that we are working through.

Shaun

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 22, 2015, at 11:35 AM, Carey, Curtis <Carey.Curtis@epa.gov> wrote:

Shaun,

I spoke with Nancy this morning and will be helping on the Thursday event. I'm here at the Joint Information Center in Durango. Looking forward to engaging with you, the team EPA has up on the mountain and the community.

We had a an effective public meeting Thursday here in Durango. The resulting news coverage covered the story well. One of the key elements of the success was the joint open house tables staffed by EPA experts and our state and local partners. It gave the public the chance to speak directly with the experts and get more detailed information for their specific concerns than is possible in large Townhall style settings.

Hot Topics at the meeting in Durango:

- Public Health – local and state health officials and mayor spoke to this very effectively.
- o Safety of drinking water from the city supply
- o Safety of the river water for recreation
- Winterization of the mine
- River and well testing results and what it means
- Sediment testing results and what it means

- Current state of mine
 - o Flow rate
 - o Treatment methods used in the ponds
- Mayor provided a detailed and methodical description of how city water is being treated – provided confidence it was suitable for use

Best,

Curtis

Curtis D. Carey, Ph.D.

Region 7 Public Affairs Director

Cell 913-233-6308

<http://www.durangoherald.com/article/20150820/NEWS01/150829964/Second-EPA-community-meeting-draws-about-150-people->

Residents get water-quality assurance after Gold King Mine spill

Issue-related breakout tables give Durangoans specific information

By Ann Butler Herald staff writer

Four days after the Gold King Mine spill, more than 600 area residents attended a community meeting full of anger and pointed fingers.

On Thursday night, the turnout was far diminished, with about 150 people showing up at Miller Middle School to get the latest updates, responding with applause to local officials talking about their efforts to make sure our water supply is safe.

After explaining the testing at every stage the city of Durango is doing on water pulled from the Animas River, Mayor Dean Brookie said, “I can assure you that the water coming out of

your tap has been more highly tested than any bottle of water on the shelves of City Market.”

One questioner asked why the city didn’t wait until the spring runoff before turning on its Animas River intake.

“Because testing from three different agencies said it was safe to turn it on now,” Brookie said, “and major summer users such as Durango Parks and (Recreation), School District 9-R, (Fort Lewis College) and Hillcrest Golf (Club) were pressing for water to take care of their grounds.”

“There’s been so much attention; it’s been so dramatic, and all that attention may be out of proportion with what we’re dealing with here,” one woman said. “People are acting as though this were at the level of the Love Canal or Gulf (Coast) oil spill, and it’s not.”

Others spoke of the need for healing between San Juan and La Plata counties, were angered that testing results are difficult to understand for lay people, and some wondered if all the Environmental Protection Agency is going to do is test and wait for high-water events to wash the sediment down river.

“No, we’re working up at the mine site so the drainage doesn’t continue,” said David Ostrander, program director for the EPA’s Preparedness, Assessment and Emergency Response.

In addition to giving residents updates from the EPA, La Plata County, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, San Juan Basin Health Department and other agencies, the meeting allowed residents to get information at breakout tables about specific issues.

The most highly swarmed table was addressing environmental monitoring and water safety, which included representatives from Colorado Parks and Wildlife, EPA and the state health department. It was mentioned in the auditorium that two beavers had been found dead.

"They've been sent to Grand Junction to be tested," Parks and Wildlife spokesman Joe Lewandowski said, adding there was no obvious reason for their deaths. "After a dead fish was found near Santa Rita Park last Thursday, we floated from 32nd Street to the High Bridge and found six more. They've also been sent for testing. I don't want to underplay what's happened, but fish die, just like people die."

EPA toxicologist Kristen Keteles was one of the most popular scientists at the meeting.

"I keep telling people ... that the dose makes the poison," she said. "Even water can be toxic if you drink enough. And people are getting more arsenic if they drink apple juice or more mercury if they eat tuna than they'll get from the Animas River. We can't eliminate chemicals entirely."

From: Grantham, Nancy
Sent: Saturday, August 22, 2015 10:08 AM
To: Carey, Curtis
Subject: FW: Silverton, San Juan County EPA Public Meeting

From: McGrath, Shaun
Sent: Saturday, August 22, 2015 8:56 AM
To: Grantham, Nancy; Shanahan, Mike; Gray, David; Tyler, Patti
Subject: Fwd: Silverton, San Juan County EPA Public Meeting

Nancy,

Here is the invite I received from Silverton. As you will see, it is for Thursday. I'm working through HQ on this one as the Commission will also want to discuss NPL. I'll keep you posted.

Shaun

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jim Donovan <oem@sanjuancountycolorado.us>
Date: August 20, 2015 at 10:25:34 PM MDT
To: <McGrath.Shaun@epa.gov>, "Denney - CDPS, Trevor"
<trevor.denney@state.co.us>, William Tookey <sanjuancounty@frontier.net>, Chris
and William Tookey <chris@frontier.net>
Subject: Silverton, San Juan County EPA Public Meeting

Hello Trevor

I discussed with Shaun McGrath today about setting up a public meeting for the Silverton, San Juan County community.

Thursday August 27th at 6:30 pm at Silverton Town Hall would be an appropriate time. Shaun requested that I submit the inquiry through the official channels via the Unified Command.

The goals for the meeting:

- 1) An update on the Gold King, Red and Bonita Project. Briefing the community on current progress and the plans for winterization Steve Way Project Manager
- 2) Funding mechanisms for long term reclamation of acid mine drainage in Upper Cement Creek. Addressing community concerns and presenting options Shaun McGrath or Martin Hestmark.

Shaun mentioned possibly bringing in some other personnel to help educate the community about the different programs so they can make an informed decision.

thanks

Jim

Jim Donovan

Emergency Manager

San Juan County, CO

PO Box 184

Silverton Co 81433
970-903-7039